Reviewer’s report

Title: A systematic review of musculoskeletal disorders in the teaching profession

Version: 1 Date: 4 October 2011

Reviewer: Deborah Alperovitch-Najenson

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The manuscript reports on the prevalence and risk factors for MSD in the teaching profession.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. A systematic review is an appropriate design to study this topic. Yet, as there are quite few studies in the field, it would be appropriate to examine first of all whether the teachers are at risk for developing musculoskeletal disorders; whether there is a difference between teachers working in different fields; and the relative risk of musculoskeletal disorders for teachers compare with other occupations workers.

2. As to the methods, there are no exclusion criteria. I would suggest excluding the articles that their recall period is not specified. I believe that those articles do not contribute to any conclusions as their period for musculoskeletal disorders could be lifetime.

3. I suggest that the results of risk factors chapter will be divided into sub chapters, and the discussion as well. Psychosocial risk factors should be added to the discussion, as it is a well discussed risk factor for musculoskeletal disorders in other occupations. Both chapters should demonstrate clearer ideas and be better organized.

4. As I understand, there is just one study dealing with knee pain in physical education teachers. A general conclusion that "physical education teachers have been found to have the lowest MSD prevalence in various body regions except for the knees" would be too ambitious.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The words "complaining" and "reporting" on pain are used both. To my opinion "reporting" is the right word to use.

2. In the results, risk factors, third paragraph, I do not understand the meaning of the "P"s.

3. In the discussion, I do not understand the last two rows: between what exactly is there no difference?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests